**Sore Muscles after Exercising?**

The path to improving your health is filled with many new and exciting things! In order to develop the wonderful benefits of exercise, your body first has to adapt and build a strong base. As you try new exercises or increase the difficulty of exercises, you are sure to experience soreness in new areas. This soreness comes from creating small tears in those new muscles you used as well as straining the muscle groups you use in everyday life. Although this sensation may be uncomfortable at first, it is important to understand that this is the body’s reaction to the new activity and that you are growing stronger!

**What you can do to lessen the amount of soreness**

* **Warm up AND cool down**- Doing dynamic movements such as biking, jogging, light exercises that involve your large muscle groups before a workout can help reduce soreness by increasing the speed and amount of blood that flows to your muscles. Just simple stretching may not always be enough to really wake up those muscles you are about to use in the workout. It is also essential to stretch those muscles after you complete the workout. Doing so will help circulate more blood away from your muscles and back toward the heart for recovery to start.
* **Increase your water intake**- Ensuring that you have enough water in your body will help many things such as loosening your joints and helping the transport of nutrients throughout your body. Drinking enough water will also help your body cool down after the workout as it plays a large role in temperature control. Proper water intake may need to start a few days before the actual workout. You may increase the chance of cramps, fatigue, and prolonged soreness if you do not maintain proper hydration.
* **Use proper techniques-** A large portion of injuries come from lack of proper lifting form. Take advantage of our knowledgeable fitness staff and ask them to watch your form when completing exercises! Knowing the proper way to lift weights and use the machines and equipment will greatly reduce the chance of excess muscle strain or injury.

**Final reminders and things to take away**

Having soreness and being uncomfortable is a very normal and essential step in improving your body’s health and overall fitness. Because you took your body out of its normal resting state in a healthy way, your muscles, tendons, and joints will be able to recover. In due time these muscles, tendons and joints will be able to work longer and endure higher intensities, further propelling you in your journey to improved health.

Never be afraid to seek care if you are concerned with the pain levels, the amount of time you are taking to recover, and if you have any dizziness or trouble breathing.